

Ascension Lutheran Church

Second Sunday of Advent December 6, 2020

Welcome, All, In the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord!

December birthdays: Dale McKillop, Lisa Philbeck, Catherine Lilly, Dave Williams

John calls people to repent, to clear the decks, to completely reorder their lives so that nothing gets in the way of the Lord's coming. The reading from Isaiah gives the context for this radical call: the assurance of forgiveness that encourages us to repent; the promise that the coming one will be gentle with the little ones. Isaiah calls us all to be heralds with John, to lift up our voices fearlessly and say, "See, your God is coming!" We say it to one another in worship, in order to say it with our lives in a world in need of justice and peace.

PRELUDE

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be God, Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit,
whose forgiveness is sure
and whose steadfast love endures forever.

Amen.

Together let us honestly and humbly confess
that we have not lived as God desires.

Silence for reflection.

Loving and forgiving God,

we confess that we are held captive by sin.

In spite of our best efforts, we have gone astray. We have not welcomed the stranger; we have not loved our neighbor; we have not been Christ to one another.

Restore us, O God.

Wake us up and turn us from our sin. Renew us each day in the light of Christ.

Amen.

People of God, hear this glad news:

by God's endless grace your sins are forgiven, and you are free—

free from all that holds you back and free to live in the peaceable realm of God.

May you be strengthened in God's love, † comforted by Christ's peace,
and accompanied with the power of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

HYMN #254

"Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus"

Verses 1-2



1 Come, thou long-ex - pect-ed Je - sus, born to set thy peo-ple free;
2 Born thy peo-ple to de - liv - er, born a child, and yet a king;



from our fears and sins re - lease us; let us find our rest in thee.
born to reign in us for - ev - er, now thy gra - cious king-dom bring.



Is - rael's strength and con - so - la - tion, hope of all the earth thou art,
By thine own e - ter - nal Spir-it rule in all our hearts a - lone;



dear de - sire of ev - 'ry na - tion, joy of ev - 'ry long-ing heart.
by thine all - suf - fi - cient mer - it raise us to thy glo - rious throne.

Text: Charles Wesley, 1707-1788
Music: JEFFERSON, W. Walker, *Southern Harmony*, 1835

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray.

Stir up our hearts, Lord God, to prepare the way of your only Son. By his coming strengthen us to serve you with purified lives; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

HYMN #257

“O Come, O Come Emmanuel” Verse 1

O come, O come, Emmanuel,
and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lonely exile here
until the Son of God appear.

Refrain
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to you, O Israel.

ADVENT BLESSING

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, ruler of the universe.

John the Baptist calls all people to prepare the Lord’s way
for the kingdom of heaven is near.

Bless us as we light the candles on this wreath.

Baptize us with the fire of your Spirit,

that we may be a light shining in the darkness welcoming others as Christ has
welcomed us, for he is our light and our salvation.

Blessed be God forever.

Amen.

Silence for reflection while the first and second candles are lit.

HYMN #257

“O Come, O Come Emmanuel” Verse 3

O come, O come, O Lord of might,
as to your tribes on Sinai's height
in ancient times you gave the law
in cloud, and majesty, and awe.

Refrain
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to you, O Israel.

FIRST READING: Isaiah 40:1-11

A reading from Isaiah.

¹Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God.

²Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her
that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid,
that she has received from the LORD’s hand double for all her sins.

³A voice cries out:

“In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD,
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

⁴Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low;
the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain.

⁵Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed,
and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.”

⁶A voice says, “Cry out!”

And I said, “What shall I cry?”

All people are grass, their constancy is like the flower of the field.

⁷The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the LORD blows upon it;
surely the people are grass.

⁸The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand forever.

⁹Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good tidings;
lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings,
lift it up, do not fear;

say to the cities of Judah, “Here is your God!”

¹⁰See, the Lord GOD comes with might, and his arm rules for him;
his reward is with him, and his recompense before him.

¹¹He will feed his flock like a shepherd;

he will gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom,
and gently lead the mother sheep.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL: Mark 1:1-8

The holy gospel according to Mark, the first chapter.

Glory to you O Lord.

¹The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

²As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,

“See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way;

³the voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

‘Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight.’”

⁴John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁵And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. ⁶Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. ⁷He proclaimed, "The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. ⁸I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

The gospel of our Lord.

Praise to you O Christ.

SERMON The Rev. Christina Auch

HYMN #423 **"Shall We Gather at the River"**

Verses 1-2



1 Shall we gath - er at the riv - er, where bright an - gel feet have trod,
 2 On the mar - gin of the riv - er, wash - ing up its sil - ver spray,
 3 Ere we reach the shin - ing riv - er, lay we ev - 'ry bur - den down;
 4 Soon we'll reach the shin - ing riv - er, soon our pil - grim - age will cease;



with its crys - tal tide for - ev - er flow - ing by the throne of God?
 we will walk and wor - ship ev - er, all the hap - py gold - en day.
 grace our spir - its will de - liv - er, and pro - vide a robe and crown.
 soon our hap - py hearts will quiv - er with the mel - o - dy of peace.



Yes, we'll gath - er at the riv - er, the beau - ti - ful, the beau - ti - ful riv - er;



gath - er with the saints at the riv - er that flows by the throne of God.

NICENE CREED

God has gathered his people into one Church through Christ. Together with sisters and brothers throughout the world, we confess our faith...

**We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God,
begotten, not made, of one being with the Father;
through him all things were made.**

**For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary, and became truly human.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.**

**On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.**

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.

We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come.

Amen.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

God of power and might, tear open the heavens and come quickly to this weary world. Hear our prayers for everyone in need.

Silence for reflection.

Faithful God, you teach us to wait for you with faithfulness and patience. Sustain and support us in our doubts and questions. Nurture our faith as we discern and enact your mission. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Loving God, you set the stars in the sky and breathe life into the earth. Renew the face of creation where it is in need of your healing touch. Mend the wounds of environmental damage and restore balance to ecosystems so that all creation can declare your praise. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Steadfast God, you never tire of seeking justice. Where people suffer from discrimination, judgment, and injustice, speak words of truth and comfort. Lead us toward a world where faithfulness will sprout underfoot and righteousness rain down from above. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Leading God, you ask us to make uneven ground smooth. Make even the disparities between your people. Sustain and support people with physical and intellectual disabilities. Accompany disability advocates who work for a world accessible to all. Teach us to celebrate the great diversity in our midst. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Tender God, you know sorrow and joy alike. We pray for those in our families and congregation who are not joyful in this holiday season. Comfort those who grieve, be a companion to all who are lonely, tend those who are sick or struggling with depression, and gather all people in your healing embrace. We pray especially for those we name aloud now or silently in our hearts...

Grant Adcock (Bob and Vicki Jones' grandson), **Kathy** Backof (Donna Lilly's friend), **Dan** Birch (Carol Berger's brother-in-law), **Carolyn** Blitz (Bill Bridges' friend), **Cody** Bryant (Bob Bryant's grandson), **Chris** Carman (Judy Bridges' friend), **Martha** Cash (Bill Bridge's friend), **Edna** Cooper (Bill Bridges Aunt), **The Davenport Family** (Dave and Priscilla Williams friends), **Charles and Mary** Degree (Karen Long's friends), **Saher** Degree (Gail Sherman's friend), **Gloria** Dellinger (Greg Blalock's aunt), **Charles** Duval (Ludy Wilkie's friend), **Maurice and Barbara** Duval (Ludy Wilkie's friends), **Tim** Farmer (Pastor Christina and Jamie's friend), **Avan** Fields (Carol Berger's friend), **Ann** Fitzsimmons (Steve and Jenny White's friend), **Mike** Greene (Gail Sherman's friend), **Markye and Carl** Greenwald (DeBell's friends), **Rena** Huffman (Jim Wilson's sister-in-law),

Michael Huntsinger (Ludy Wilkie's friend), **Joe** Hutchinson (William Coyne's friend), **Patti** Jenkins (Priscilla Williams' friend), **Steve** Jolly (Ludy Wilkie's friend), **Mark** Kent (Majorie Olsen's son), **Rachel** Kidwell (Dave William's niece), **Bryan** Legrand (Ludy Wilkie's friend), **Jim** Lilly (Dick and Donna Lilly's son), **Sonya and Gerald** Lovelace (Bill Bridges friend), **Brenda** Lowery (Gail Sherman's friend), **Pam** Lucas (Ludy Wilkie's friend), **Eva** McCombs (Sandra Waldrop's mother), **Janice** McGoven (Eleanor Hendricks' sister), **Sheri Dawn** Mack (Relative of Karen Hubbard), **Maribeth** Norris Mies (Carol Berger's cousin), **Wanda** Mullinax (Edith Kelly's niece), **Teresa** Olsen (Marjorie Olsen's daughter-in-law), **Bob** Patzer (Carol Berger's brother-in-law), **Linda** Patzer (Carol Berger's sister), **Margaret** Peruzzi (Carol Berger's mother), **Liz and Ron** Dal Poggetto (Judy Bridges' friends), **Tommy and Paula** Price (Edith Kelly's nephew), **Bonnie** Reidy (Dave and Jennie Lambert's friend), **Beth** Rhyne (Ladley and Jane Burn's friend), **Harold** Rhyne (Ladley and Jane Burn's friend), **Lola** Ritchie (Rose Cook's mother), **Shannon** Sellers (Libby Stone's cousin), **Jean** Tesseneer (Bill Bridges friend), **Pam** Unger (Willi and Ray Lacy's friend), **Edith** Walker (Allen and Lisa Philbeck's friend's mother), **Molly and Darryl** Waterstraat (Karen Hubbard's friends), **Alfie** Welch (Renee Buchanan's brother), **Lan** Welch (Renee Buchanan's mother), **Christopher** Willever (David Williams' grandson), **Mary Ann** Woolley (Sandra Waldrop's aunt), **Denise and Savannah** Yount (Sandra Waldrop's friends)

Members: **Dean** Davis, **Lin** Washburn, **Dot** Paul, **Bob** Bryant, **William** Coyne, **Jim** Wilson, **Bobbie** Johnson, **Gerald** Washburn, **Ray** Valentine, **Lucinda** Wallen, **Lisa** Upton and **Jenny** White.

In Undergraduate College: **Emma** Auch, **Brooke** Buchanan, **Samantha** Hoffman, **Jacob** Stone, **Catherine** Mae Lilly

Those Awaiting Arrival of Children: Kristen and Becca Gillespie (daughter and daughter-in-law of Joanna Gillespie.)

Ministry Partners: Hospice Cleveland County staff, leaders and those they serve.

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Eternal God, we give thanks for the saints who have prepared your way in the wilderness and taught us to continue their faithful work. Make their generous lives an example for all. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Draw near to us, O God, and receive our prayers for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

PASSING OF THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

The people may greet one another with a sign of Christ's peace on video or say: "Peace be with you" from wherever you are or type it in the chat or comments.

OFFERING

*Make a one time or recurring gift using **the website** or **the GivePlus app** on iPhone or Android. You can give using ACH (bank account), Visa, MasterCard, Discover or American Express.*

*Or **text 844-906-2283** and enter the amount you wish to donate. Then click the registration link and enter your payment information. You will receive a verification text as well as an email receipt. For future giving, simply send a text to the same number with the amount you wish to give, and your donation will process automatically.*

Or mail your regular tithe or offering to PO Box 266, Shelby, NC 28151.

OFFERTORY "Doxology"

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
praise him, all creatures here below;
praise him above, ye heav'nly host;
praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

THANKSGIVING FOR THE WORD

Let us pray...

Holy God, the Beginning and the Ending, our Hope as we wait,
we praise you for joining us to your people of old.

We bless you for your prophets who call us to righteousness
and promise a new earth with peace for all.

For the Word of your covenant, we thank you, O God. **We thank you, O God.**

We praise you for the coming of Jesus our Lord,
who lifts up the lowly, heals the suffering world,
and proclaims your way of mercy and truth.

For your Word who is Christ, we magnify you, O God. **We magnify you, O God.**

Send your Spirit on all who receive your Word.

Nurture our faith with your grace,
accompany us with your might,
and empower our zeal for your justice and joy.

For your Word through the church, we praise you, O God. **We praise you, O God.**

All praise to you, holy God,
today, tomorrow, and forever. Amen. **Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

Our Father, who art in heaven,

hallowed be thy name,

thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread;

and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us;

and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever.

Amen.

SENDING OF HOME COMMUNION

When our congregation gathered for Holy Communion with all the saints from every time and place, we heard again the story of God's mighty acts and the love shown us in Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. The holy meal of the Lord's supper was shared. Now we share this Word of life, and this bread and cup of blessing, that we may share in these same gifts and be strengthened by the Christian community, even though we gather separately for a time.

Gathered at the Lord's table, our congregation remembered with thanksgiving that "in the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me. Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave

thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.”

This is the supper of our Lord Jesus Christ. This bread and cup, shared in our community of faith, are here given for you.

Share the bread, saying, “The body of Christ, given for you.” And share the wine or grape juice, saying, “The blood of Christ, shed for you.”

Let us pray.

Gracious God, in this meal you have drawn us to your heart, and nourished us at your table with food and drink, the body and blood of Christ. Now send us forth to be your people in the world, and to proclaim your truth this day and evermore, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

BLESSING

The Lord bless us and keep us. The Lord’s face shine on us with grace and mercy. The Lord look upon us with favor and ☩ give us peace.

Amen.

HYMN #260

“The King Shall Come”

Verses 1-2



- 1 The King shall come when morn-ing dawns and light tri - um-phant breaks,
- 2 Not as of old a lit - tle child, to bear and fight and die,
- 3 Oh, bright - er than the ris - ing morn when Christ, vic - to - rious, rose
- 4 Oh, bright - er than that glo - rious morn shall dawn up - on our race
- 5 The King shall come when morn-ing dawns and light and beau - ty brings.



when beau - ty gilds the east - ern hills and life to joy a - wakes.
but crowned with glo - ry like the sun that lights the morn-ing sky.
and left the lone - some place of death, de - spite the rage of foes.
the day when Christ in splen - dor comes, and we shall see his face.
Hail, Christ the Lord! Your peo - ple pray: come quick - ly, King of kings.

Text: John Brownlie, 1859–1925

Music: CONSOLATION, A. Davisson, *Kentucky Harmony*, 1816

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Prepare the way of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Coronavirus Response: Our sanctuary remains closed, but the fellowship hall is available for small groups (less than 10) with social distancing and masks required. Contact Debby in the church office for more information.

Prayer Concerns: Please call or email the office or text Pastor Christina at 704-472-7783 to update prayer requests. You may leave a voicemail but please provide the spelling of any names, and your relationship to the person being prayed for.

Please continue your tithes and offerings. Make a one time or recurring gift using **the website** or **the GivePlus app** on iPhone or Android. You can give using ACH (bank account), Visa, MasterCard, Discover or American Express.

Or **text 844-906-2283** and enter the amount you wish to donate. Then click the registration link and enter your payment information. You will receive a verification text as well as an email receipt. For future giving, simply send a text to the same number with the amount you wish to give, and your donation will process automatically.

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Ascension Lutheran Church

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